DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 402 675 EA 028 140

AUTHOR Shapiro, Joan Poliner; Stefkovich, Jacqueline A.
TITLE Dealing with Dilemmas in a Morally Polarized Era: The Conflicting Ethical Codes of Educational Leaders.
PUB DATE Oct 96
NOTE 24p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the University Council for Educational Administration (10th, Louisville, KY, October 25-27, 1996).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Education; *Codes of Ethics; Doctoral Programs; Educational Administration; *Ethical Instruction; Higher Education; *Moral Development; *Moral Values
IDENTIFIERS *Temple University PA

ABSTRACT

Although scholars may recognize the importance of ethics for educational leaders, they have not yet resolved how the subject can or should be taught. This paper presents an approach to teaching ethics that incorporates both traditional and nontraditional methods, discusses how this approach is carried out with a diverse student body, and attempts to respond to the need for research. The course was designed for doctoral cohort students in Temple University's Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department. The paper describes both the personal and professional codes of ethics of the two professors who taught the course and students, drawing from a qualitative analysis of 100 students' personal and professional codes. Professional codes developed by national, state, and local organizations were found to have little impact on the views of students, who found value in creating their own codes of ethics. Conflicts tended to be found between students employed in higher education settings and those employed in school systems; among urban, rural, and suburban educators; and among students with different life experiences and careers. Finally, several students realized that they had relied on a kind of situational ethics to deal with daily problems. (Contains 39 references.) (LMI)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 402 675

Dealing with Dilemmas in a Morally Polarized Era:

The Conflicting Ethical Codes of Educational Leaders

By

Joan Poliner Shapiro
Professor

and

Jacqueline A. Stefkovich
Associate Professor

Temple University
College of Education

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION
CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

J. Shapiro

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

Mailing Address:
Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department
2nd Floor Ritter Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19122

Phone:
(215) 204-8061

Paper presented at the University Council of Educational Administration Convention,
Louisville, Kentucky, October 26, 1996.

EA 028 140

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Dealing with Dilemmas in a Morally Polarized Era:
The Conflicting Ethical Codes of Educational Leaders

by
Joan Poliner Shapiro
and
Jacqueline A. Stefkovich

> The second portion of the class was devoted to merging personal ethical codes into a communal code. I was hysterical. I wrote paragraphs instead of a list. Maybe I was listening to the directions with my 'inner' ear. I got to meet and know members of the cohort and their thoughts on ethics. This was informative, discussing our views on religion/God and ethics. You never know what other people live by. You assume most of us in education would share more of the same beliefs. We don't.
>
> (Doctoral Student in Educational Leadership)

This research represents the fourth in a series of articles emphasizing various aspects of teaching ethics to educational leaders. In our first paper (1994), we focused on our need, as professors of educational leadership teaching ethics, to reflect upon our own ethical personal codes, and upon the critical incidents in our lives that shaped our teaching. In our second paper (1996), we took this research one step further by focusing directly on content and pedagogy. Differences in pedagogy were reflected through a comparison of student assignments and a content analysis of course notes indicating what we privileged. In our third paper, we turned to our students.[1] Using qualitative research procedures, we deconstructed our ethics classes to examine the different voices heard and how these voices influenced the teaching and learning of ethics.

In this, our fourth paper, we examine both personal and professional codes of ethics, starting with our own, as professors, and then progressing to and emphasizing the codes of our students. When we speak of personal codes, we mean those ideals or concepts that each of us tries to live up to in our private lives. When we talk of professional codes, we have defined them as the ideals or concepts that each of us attempts to follow in our roles at work. In this discussion, we also take into account ethical codes promulgated by professional associations, how these codes have or have not influenced our own view of ethics and that of our students, and how professional codes may enhance or conflict with personal codes.

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Although many professions, such as law, medicine, dentistry, and business, require their students to take at least one ethics course as part of their graduate program, no such requirement exists in the training of educational administrators. Recently, however, there have been a number

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

of scholars (Beck and Murphy, 1994a, 1994b; Cambron-McCabe and Foster, 1994; Greenfield, 1988, 1993; McKinney, 1993, 1994; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 1994 and others) pointing out the importance of such a requirement. [2]

In other professions, ethics has been considered essential for the socialization of the individual into the profession and as a way to instill basic professional values. In a similar light, whether required or not for entrance into the field of educational administration, the rationale for ethical preparation extends beyond the basic assumption that an educational leader should merely be aware of professional ethics. As Foster (1986, p.33) notes: "Each administrative decision carries with it a restructuring of human life: that is why administration at its heart is the resolution of moral dilemmas."

Even though scholars may recognize the importance of ethics for educational leaders, they have not yet been able to resolve how this subject can be or should be taught. Additionally, little research has been conducted on this question (Beck and Murphy, 1994a, 1994b). This paper presents an approach that incorporates both traditional and nontraditional methods of teaching ethics, discusses how this approach is carried out with a diverse student body, and attempts to respond to the need for research regarding this important matter.

According to John Dewey (1908), ethics is the science that deals with conduct in so far as this is considered as right or wrong, good or bad. Ethics comes from the Greek word "ethos" which means customs or usages, especially belonging to one group as distinguished from another. Later ethics came to mean, disposition or character, customs and approved ways of acting. Looking at this definition from a critical perspective, one might ask: Ethics approved by whom? Right or wrong according to whom? In this paper, in an attempt to answer these important questions, we will turn to three conceptual frameworks emanating from diverse traditions that have an impact on education. These frameworks include ethics from a traditional, liberal democratic viewpoint, ethics from a critical theory perspective, and feminist ethics.

Traditional liberal democratic ethics in education is derived from the work of philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Locke, Hobbes, Kant, and Mills. More recently, ethical writings in education based on the liberal democratic tradition include works by Goodlad, Soder, and Sirotnik (1990), Sergiovanni (1992), and Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1988), to name but a few. In the liberal democratic tradition as it relates to education, liberalism is defined as a "commitment to human freedom," and democracy implies "procedures for making decisions that respect the equal sovereignty of the people" (Strike, 1991, p.415). The language of traditional liberal democratic ethics includes concepts such as justice, rights, and law. Arguments are constructed in such as way as to be perceived as objective, remote, and impartial and a framework is usually provided that asks one to think in a logical, step by step manner.

A number of writers and activists who have gained prominence (Bakhtin, 1981; Foucault, 1983; Freire and Shor 1987; Greene, 1988; Giroux, 1994) are not convinced by this rational, step by step process or with its focus on abstract justice, rights and law. These scholars see a tension in this tradition between liberalism and democracy and focus heavily on the critique both of the

laws themselves and of the process used to determine if the laws are just. Rather than accepting the ethics of those in power, they challenge the status quo by seeking an ethics that will deal with paradoxes, formulate the hard questions, and debate and challenge the issues. Their intent is to awaken us to our own stated morals and values and make us realize how frequently these values have been modified and even corrupted over time, thus forcing us to rethink important concepts such as democracy, social justice, privilege, and power.

Another group (Beck, 1994; Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger and Tarule, 1986; Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, Ward, and Taylor, 1988; Noddings, 1984, 1992; Shapiro and Smith-Rosenberg, 1989) challenges the patriarchal laws and dominant ethics of our society. Frequently turning to voices of care, concern, and connectedness over time, they, as do the critical thinkers, see social responsibility as a pivotal part of ethics. Their focus on relationships leads to discussions of issues such as continuity, respect, trust, and empowerment. Similar to critical theorists, feminists tend to emphasize social responsibility, frequently discussed in the light of injustice, as a pivotal concept of ethics.

Research Design

This paper considers qualitative research that we -- two professors of educational leadership -- conducted, while teaching the same ethics course in different semesters, during a six year period. On the surface, our teaching strategies and assignments and syllabi were quite similar, using basically the same readings and including alternative as well as traditional views of ethics. However, we came to realize, through dialogue and a form of peer review that occurred as we spoke to each other, that one of us, a feminist with a background in higher education administration, focused much more on the language of critique and possibilities and of care, concern, and connectedness over time, while the other, a lawyer with experience as a public school guidance counselor, privileged the language of rights, justice, and law. This paper is the fourth in a series of publications that we have written on this topic and it is the second time that we have examined our students' reactions. Here, our focus is on students' personal and professional ethical codes.

Background

During the period from 1990-1996, that we have taught ethics, approximately 100 students participated in our classes as part of their doctoral cohort requirement. Probably most striking about these students was their diversity.[3] The total number of students was evenly distributed across gender with the balance varying from year to year. Students in the class ranged from their mid-twenties to almost sixty and their professional experiences were often just as diverse. As might be expected, there were public school teachers and administrators, however, others worked in higher education institutions and some came from business. There were counselors, psychologists, and biologists. There were English teachers and physics teachers. Most of the students worked full time, but a few others were full time graduate students. Some of the students had previous training in ethics. Most had none.

Geographically, there was considerable diversity. Some students came from a large urban center (the location of our university); others came from smaller cities within our state and from other neighboring states. Some students commuted from very rural areas while others lived in wealthy suburbs. For example, in one class, there was a woman from Trinidad, a man from Ethiopia, a relocated New Yorker, and a student born and raised in a rural area with a substantial Amish and Mennonite population. Religious differences were noticeable. Though mostly Christian or Jewish, these students represented a variety of factions within these religions. For instance, some students belonged to the city's black Baptist churches. Others were white Christian fundamentalists from a "Bible Belt" part of the state. The authors taught Jewish students, a Catholic nun, persons from a wide variety of Protestant religions, and people who never mentioned religion as part of their identity.

Methodology

Our goal in conducting the qualitative part of this research was to examine the class' personal and professional codes from a wide variety of perspectives and sources. The methodology used in this research consisted of: a) an analysis of class notes; b) comparisons of student journals focusing on reflections of readings and class experiences; c) an analysis of audio tapes of class discussions; d) student observations noted in these journals; e) comparisons of student-written case studies; f) a comparison and contrast of students' written personal and professional ethical codes; g) observations by the professors; and h) peer analyses by the professors. Special attention was given to similarities and differences related to the diversity of students in these classes (i.e., racial/ethnic and gender differences as well as diversity in career aspirations -- from higher education, elementary/secondary education, etc.). Information was coded and sorted into various patterns and themes in a manner supported by qualitative researchers such as Bogdan and Biklen (1992), LeCompte and Preissle (1993), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Merriam (1988), and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

Various strategies including triangulation (of data sources as well as methods) and peer reviews were employed to ensure internal validity and to guard against bias. As with all qualitative research, generalizability *per se* is limited, however, we believe that the patterns, themes and dilemmas we have identified will add considerably to the knowledge base and will be of great assistance to practitioners, scholars, and others conducting similar research.

Overview of the Ethics Course

This course was designed for doctoral cohort students in our Educational Leadership and Policy Studies department. The course content and the assessment process asked graduate students to study the three dimensions advocated by Starratt (1994) for preparation of educational leaders: the ethic of justice, the ethic of critique, and the ethic of care. It took into account the pluralism of contemporary society and the need to educate diverse students for participating in a democracy. Additionally, it recognized the need for the study of ethics to help prepare students

for leadership positions that would involve making important ethical decisions each day.

As stated in our syllabus, this course focuses on ethics primarily from an analytical perspective. It is designed to explore the moral and ethical dimensions of the work of school administrators and to assist them to resolve ethical dilemmas in more reflective, intelligent, and principled ways. The course has three purposes. They are: to examine traditional ethics which emphasizes consequentialist and nonconsequentialist approaches and then to examine alternative forms of moral development including critical theory as applied to justice and feminist ethics; to compare and contrast ones own code of ethics with that of a professional code of ethics; and to explore approaches to moral and ethical reasoning and use these approaches to work through ethical dilemmas related to practice.

In our ethics course, we not only took into account the voices emanating from the liberal democratic tradition, but we took seriously the voices of the non-traditional educational ethicists. Although one of us tended to privilege the non-traditional voices more than the other, we both, in varying degrees, made certain to hear other voices -- frequently of the "underdog" or the groups who have long been out of power, silenced and ignored.

The Professors' Codes of Ethics

In this morally polarized age, we believe that it is extremely important for us as professionals and educational leaders to have a sense of who we are and what we believe in personally and professionally. We have found, through our teaching, that an important exercise for students has been to pull together personal ethical codes, based upon life stories and critical incidents, and then develop professional codes based on the experiences and expectations of ones working life. It is also important to compare and contrast personal and professional ethical codes looking for consistencies and inconsistencies. Frequently, we have found that some of these inconsistencies are so profound that they lead to clashes in students' personal and professional lives. We have also discovered another source of a collision of codes. This may occur if an individual has been prepared in two or more professions. Codes of one profession may be different from another; thus, what serves an individual well in one career may not in another.

We realized that since we had asked our students to embark on such difficult soul-searching assignments that it was also important that we, as their professors of ethics, do the same. Consequently, in an earlier paper (Stefkovich and Shapiro, 1994), we examined, in some detail, our own backgrounds and the critical incidents that shaped our personal codes of ethics. Therefore, before turning to our students, in this paper, we will briefly discuss a few of the critical incidents in our lives that we believe have been most prominent in shaping our professional codes of ethics. Clearly, in the space allotted, we can provide merely a sketch and, thus, would refer the reader to our earlier work for a more detailed picture. However, although briefly stated, in this paper, we will frame our lives a little differently than in our other writing to enable us to explore the clashes of codes that occurred through our different professional training and experiences.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Joan's Story

For over thirty years, I have been an educator. My career, while always situated in an educational environment has varied greatly over time. For example, I have moved from instructing and learning in the U.S. to the U.K; from junior high school teaching to college teaching; from the field of education to the interdisciplinary area of feminist scholarship; from administering a women's studies program to administering a College of Education. With reflection, it seems to me that these changes in my career have had a profound effect not only on my professional ethical beliefs but on my personal ones as well. Additionally, my diverse training and experiences tended to create difficult dilemmas for me whenever I am faced with problems in professional ethics.

I would like to provide you with a quick overview of my professional life. In the mid-1960's, I embarked on a career in education. At that time, I began to teach American history to junior high school students in affluent Newton, Massachusetts. A few years later, I found myself in London, England, teaching British history to high school students from the Commonwealth and from the English working class. Four years later, returning to the U.K., I became a supervisor of social studies intern teachers at the University of Pennsylvania. In that position, while somewhat removed from the public school classrooms, I had the opportunity to observe in urban, suburban and rural schools. Having obtained a doctoral degree in educational administration from Penn, I once again returned to the U.K., but this time for postdoctoral studies at the University of London's Institute of Education. That proved to be a pivotal year in my life. Returning to my alma mater in the US., I made something of a career change and began to work in the interdisciplinary area of women's studies becoming a co-director of the program for more than a decade. An opportunity to return to my original area of educational administration appeared and I journeyed across the river to Temple University's College of Education where I have served as a faculty member and as an associate dean.

With that biographical sketch in mind and after considerable reflection, I would like to highlight a few professional experiences that tended to shape both my personal and professional ethical codes. I am convinced that my British background had a profound effect on making me who I am today. I will never forget the many Church of England assemblies I attended as a teacher in a state (i.e., public) secondary modern high school for girls. At those assemblies my own ethical beliefs, emanating from my life in the U.S., were challenged by my headmistress. For example, one morning she told us that a gold watch, worn by one of the students, had been stolen. A natural point of discussion for a principal might have been to focus on the crime of stealing. But I soon grew to expect something else from this headmistress. Her sermon focused on the crime of temptation rather than stealing. In this working class area, she was furious that a student would wear something expensive to school. She stressed the importance of the school uniform that should be worn without jewelry. Everyday, my headmistress challenged individualistic values for the common good of the community. I experienced what I can only think of now as a clash of cultural values.

The British experience continued to challenge much of my American background and

training. At the University of London's Institute of Education, for example, I learned that I had received an inadequate background in philosophy in American universities. There the philosophical writings of R.S. Peters and P.H. Hirst in education carried considerable weight. Unlike the U.S. where psychology is the dominant discipline underlying the field of education, the discipline of philosophy forms the framework of British education. Thus, I was challenged by the philosophically trained faculty at the Institute to pull together my own personal and professional ethical beliefs; it was clear that educators were expected to have some consistency of values in their private and public life. I took their charge seriously and upon my return to the U.S., I was frequently disturbed whenever I found that my personal and private values collided. Upon reflection, it was clear that educators at the Institute had sensitized me to these kinds of conflicts and they helped to make me feel that the study of ethics was extremely important.

Along with my experiences in the U.K., my years working in women's studies impacted profoundly on my personal and professional ethics. I had the extraordinary opportunity to teach an introductory ethics course with a well known feminist historian. She and I created many ethical dilemmas which were unfortunately easy to develop because of the constant paradoxes and contradictions most girls and women face in society. Our ethics course challenged us almost as much as our students as we looked at the areas of pornography, abortion, abuse, etc. with new eyes. We wrote about our experiences in teaching the course (Shapiro and Smith-Rosenberg, 1989) as it grew from thirty women's studies students to over one-hundred undergraduate students, many of whom were male. Through women's studies, my eyes were opened to many forms of injustice in society that included not only gender issues but also problems related to race, ethnicity, disability, social class, sexual orientation and other areas of difference. The ethics of care and of critique also began to have real meaning to me.

During the years I co-directed women's studies, our provost was a legal ethicist. He decided that ethics was such an important area that those of us who taught it should be brought together for a seminar each month from across the campus. Thus, I had the opportunity of meeting with ethics professors in areas such as law, medicine, dentistry and business on a regular basis. In those seminars, it was clear to me that ethics helped to provide socialization to each of the professions. During one session, a dilemma was presented that had an educational component. We looked around the room for a representative from the field of education. In that room, it seemed that I was the only one with background in the area. It was clear to me that there was an omission. Why was there no representative from the Graduate School of Education attending the seminar? Only a couple of years later, when given the opportunity at Temple to redesign the doctoral experience, I asked the faculty if I could develop an ethics course for the students. They agreed and that is the course that currently forms the framework for this study. It seems to me that if we believe we are a profession, then we must teach future educators ethics.

Finally, as a member of the dean's office at Temple's College of Education for over five years, I found that my ethical training was invaluable. Each day we faced dilemmas: what was good for the university was not always good for the college; what was good for the college was not always good for the department; and what was good for the department was not always good

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

for the individual. Unlike C.P. Snow's era, the great divide in universities it seems to me is no longer between the arts and sciences, but it is between faculty and administration. Trying to wear both the faculty and the administrative hats, I felt the clash of what I am now beginning to think are two distinct professions. I was not always able to carry through on my ethical beliefs derived primarily from the ethics of care and critique; however, I did my best to stay grounded in these principles despite the constant barrage of paradoxical and contradictory expectations and messages that came to the dean's office daily.

Jackie's Story

My professional life has spanned over twenty-five years, but to characterize this experience as *one* career is a misnomer. Indeed, while my interest, and commitment have always focused on education, I have had several "careers" as well as training in a number of areas -- each of which had its own particular code of professional conduct and most of which influenced my personal code of conduct as well.

In the late 1960s, I was an undergraduate at Duquesne University, a coeducational Catholic institution run by priests, and one of the few universities in this country that offered a major in existential psychology. My first full time professional job was in the spring of 1969, when, as a college senior, I took my remaining courses at night and worked as a kindergarten teacher in a Catholic school that had made a commitment to racial integration by opening its doors to children in other communities within the city. The following year, I attended graduate school receiving a masters degree in Counseling and Pupil Personnel Work from The University of Connecticut. I worked as a guidance counselor in two different schools in New Jersey and in 1976 was hired by that state's Department of Education as the Supervisor of "Introduction to Vocations," a state-funded career exploration program that I had coordinated in my school district. Two years later, I became the Director of Guidance and Counseling for the state and completed a part time graduate program in school psychology from Temple University.

Enjoying my administrative work at the New Jersey Department of Education, I decided neither to resume my career as a guidance counselor nor to practice school psychology but instead to pursue a doctorate in educational administration. In 1983, I was admitted to the Administration, Planning, and Social Policy Program at Harvard University's Graduate School of Education. At the time, I had fully expected to return to New Jersey and seek an assistant superintendency. To this end, I took a school law course because I knew I would need it for my administrator's certificate. I liked this course so much that I eventually chose a school law topic for my doctoral dissertation, and in 1987, after having completed my program at Harvard, I entered law school at the University of Pennsylvania. Today, I teach school law as well as ethics to students enrolled in Temple University's Educational Leadership and Policy Studies program.

I have presented this biographical sketch because each experience I had, in some way, large or small, influenced my own personal ethical code and my view of what a professional code should encompass. For example, my undergraduate training provided me with a background in existential philosophy from the point of view of Catholic theologians during the 1960s, a time

when there was a great surge of interest in ecumenism. Thus, I came through this experience with a profound respect for the rights of the individual and an appreciation for diversity, particularly religious diversity, coupled with traditional views of rights, justice, and laws. The program where I earned my masters degree in counseling stressed the importance of empathy, putting oneself in the other person's shoes, a concept that continues to influence my professional behavior. And my early work in an integrated urban school made me sensitive to issues of equity and equality, concerns that would resurface in my later training at the Harvard Graduate School of Education and the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

At the same time, these varying professional experiences gave rise to conflicting views of ethics. I experienced clashes in codes of ethics among the professions in which I had been trained as well as conflicts between my own personal and professional codes of ethics. For example, much like the emphasis on caring, concern, and connectedness postulated by scholars such as Carol Gilligan and Nel Noddings, my training as a school counselor taught me to be empathetic and to help my clients/students put themselves in the shoes of others. The code of ethics for my other career, the legal profession, taught me to "zealously" represent the interests of my client. Here, the emphasis was on justice and the right of legal representation for every individual.

Perhaps one of the most dramatic clashes between my personal and professional ethics occurred the year after I completed law school. At the time, I held licenses to practice law in both New Jersey and Pennsylvania but wished to gain a license for the District of Columbia. To do this, I had to pass a multiple choice ethics exam consisting of "real life" examples. As I began to review some of the sample questions, I realized that I was missing more correct responses than I had expected. I found these errors to be disconcerting because I had memorized much of the profession's code of ethics, a fairly hefty volume.

I knew the code. My problem was that I was interpreting the code, i.e., applying it differently, than the attorney test-makers had intended. For example, in one sample question, an attorney charged a great deal of money for a task -- writing a letter -- that only took an hour or so to complete. I knew that there was an ethical rule against charging exorbitant fees, so I assumed there was an ethics violation. It turned out that there was no violation, the logic being that the attorney had been able to perform the task in a very short period of time because he had many years of practice in this area and could perform the task quickly because he knew the information already. There were several other similar questions not dealing with money with which I was equally confused. I passed the ethics exam, but with a great deal of apprehension.

It is only in retrospect and after much reflection that I have come to realize that even though my viewpoint has always emphasized issues of rights and justice, it has also been tempered with care and concern and interpreted through my own analytical perspective. Thus, while I had no problem memorizing, and even accepting, codified versions of professional ethics, I experienced conflict when it came to applying those same codes, a conflict which was deeply embedded in my history and in certain critical incidents that shaped the formation of my personal code of ethics and my assessment and application of professional ethical codes.

11 BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Students' Ethical Codes

As we began to deconstruct our students' ethical codes, ethical dilemmas, and journals and reflected on our own notes and audio recordings of selected classes, we were able to identify distinct themes and patterns in our students' responses. These themes -- morality, care and concern, democracy, and diversity/equity -- were initially identified and discussed in our third paper. In this paper, which is a continuation of that research, we add a fourth component indicative of our findings. This theme is conflict. In this research, we discovered three patterns of conflict. The first consisted of a clash between individual student's personal and professional ethical codes. This clash is similar in nature to the types of concerns that we as professors experienced in deconstructing our own codes. The second type of conflict was a clash between different students' perceptions of professional codes and how they should be applied. The third clash tended to happen when career changes occurred over time. The remainder of this paper will discuss our students' personal codes of ethics, their professional codes of ethics, and conflicts that resulted as differences emerged.

Students' Personal Codes of Ethics

Perhaps more than any other course requirements, students experienced great difficulty in writing their personal ethical codes. They did not seem to understand the task at hand. Showing their hesitancy, some asked if this assignment was like "writing the Ten Commandments." Others, quite a few, asked if we could provide them with a model as to what a personal code should look like. We did not provide this model, but we did take time to discuss the assignment in more depth. After some discussion, even those who seemed to understand the assignment were concerned. Such anxiety was reflected in this student's comments. As a prelude to her code, she noted that:

> Writing my own personal ethical code presents the challenge of articulating the principles which I believe in and adhere to. Although I think I understand the pertinence of this assignment, the prospect of performing it is somewhat unsettling and even fear-invoking. I can not help but wonder if what I will develop will in any way live up to my ideals of righteousness and decency in living. Hence, it is with some trepidation that I embark upon this writing journey into the core of my being. Nonetheless, my hesitancy is being encouraged by a subtle sense of pride that I have at least led an honest life thus far on this planet. With these thoughts expressed, I will now attempt to define and justify my existence in the world. [White female college teacher, late thirties]

When the codes were handed in, indeed, many did resemble the Ten Commandments. Here, themes emerged such as honesty, helping others, love, and respect for others and for human life, and variations on the Golden Rule. Indeed, religion was frequently mentioned as a source for the personal codes. One example of this can be found in the code of a white librarian from a rural area. She wrote:

> This code is definitely a result of my upbringing in the Church of the Brethren, a sect very similar to the Mennonites. My grandfather, a Brethren minister and a professor and my grandmother who wore a prayer covering served as wonderful role models. The peace loving Brethren stress the acceptance of all human beings and really live by the doctrine 'love your neighbor.' --- Although no longer a member of the church, its teachings have always stayed with me and have served me well. Note: After writing and rewriting this, it (personal code) still seems simplistic in many ways. This is definitely tough!"

Another example of the use of the Golden Rule can be found in a personal code written by a white biology faculty member in an undergraduate rural religious college. But there appears to be more ambiguity in his code than in the librarian's code. In addition, he seems to have justified the inconsistencies between religion and science. He wrote:

> I believe that there is a single standard by which I must judge my actions as I work toward a goal, a short version of the Golden Rule, 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' As a biologist I am strong believer in the process of science. I realize that insistence on testability limits the range of a scientific system of inquiry. Therefore I believe that ideas beyond the range of science may be accepted on faith, requiring no proof. In addition to the Golden Rule as an overriding guide by which I judge my actions, my behaviors are probably influenced by several thoughts or beliefs that I hold without scientific proof.

Religion was frequently linked to family in many of the students' personal codes. For example, one white male higher education administrator wrote:

> Growing up in a white middle class Jewish home, we had rules. For example, we could not watch television until after all of our homework was completed nor could we have dessert until our plates were clean. There were also expectations. You *will* do well in school, go to college, marry and raise a family, be a Bar Mitzvah, make a contribution to society, achieve beyond your limits, and thereby meet the expectations of the family. Family was important.

Sometimes, the codes were rooted in family alone without religious ties. Frequently they demonstrated the importance of responsibility and commitment. This introduction to a personal code written by a white male suburban administrator with working class roots shows the importance of family. He stated:

> Introduction - In this self examination, the variables which composed my personal code were items which have been formed through my parents' influence. These along with many joyous and painful experiences which I have encountered during the last twelve years have led me to this place in time.

But the family was not always a positive influence regarding the development of some of

our students' personal codes. One example of this can be found in the comments of a white, female administrator who led a very difficult early life. During her childhood, she was moved from home to home, with only a grandmother who at times was able to provide stability for her. She wrote as part of her code:

> I don't like to be taken advantage of by anyone, and I'll be tenacious to preserve my rights as I see them. I don't like to be told what to do, but I can be influenced to other choices if given honest facts and genuine options. I believe that I'm a sensitive person who cares deeply for people. Many of my beliefs and standards were instilled by my grandparents who were very religious. I believe in a higher being and try to practice being an honorable person in my daily life. I am basically a happy person. I like myself and who I've become, but I dislike the rocky terrain which I navigated in order to get here.

Sometimes it was more than a family that affected the personal codes of our students. In one case, a white male administrator wrote about the importance of community, in this case a small town. He stated:

> My most precious memories include community fourth of July picnics on the beach, the gathering of neighbors around the town Christmas tree singing carols, and marching in the annual Halloween parade. Everywhere I would go I would see familiar faces and that was comforting. Most recently, a family in our community tragically lost their home in a devastating fire. On at least several occasions, the community came out in droves for the various fund raisers held to help this family. It may be interesting to some that this family is African-American. However in my town I do not recall a time where the concept of community was ever segregated .... The values of this community are in my estimation, worthy values. I wish to bring my children up in a community where concern for a neighbor is a natural tendency and not the exception.

While aspects relating to religion, the family and the community tended to be part of many of the students' personal codes, there emerged sources of disagreement among the students as to what should be included in these codes. For instance, some students saw qualities such as a sense of humor as part of an ethical code while others did not. In addition, students held a high regard for human life but they did not necessarily agree as to how that translated into actions such as abortion or taking a human life under various conditions. As one student pointed out in his code:

> . . . leading an ethical life involves taking into account society's agreements about what is in the best interests of everyone. This is not always clear, as in the cases when what is lawful, and reflects the majority view, is not ethical. Capital punishment, for example, is lawful but inconsistent with the view that life is precious.

Thus, while some students saw universal precepts, others were not so sure, either implying or stating directly that ethics may change. Consider the remarks of these two white female

students. The first comes from a counselor in her thirties; the second from a principal in her forties.

- My personal code of ethics has developed throughout my life. This development has occurred through the acceptance of values presented by my parents, relatives, and important others that I have decided are valuable to live a fulfilling life. The values that I write are deeply rooted and will be carried throughout my lifetime. I have found that ethics are enforced and/or learned through life experiences. Only upon those experiences do these ethics become your own. My *developing* [emphasis added] code of ethics consist of the following . . . .

- It seems logical to assume that one's personal ethics are formed by the individual's life experiences as well as the influence of significant others and institutions in that person's sphere. If this assumption holds to be true, then it can be inferred that because life experiences are ongoing and affiliations with significant others and institutions often change, one's ethics could also change during one's lifetime. Therefore, the following list of personal ethics are those I *currently* [emphasis added] embrace.

Students' Professional Codes of Ethics

In our ethics course, we did not ignore ethical codes already generated by groups affiliated in some ways with educational administration. In fact, after the students wrote their own personal and professional ethical codes, we shared codes with them developed by such national organizations as the American Educational Research Association, the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, the American Psychological Association, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Educational Association as well as Pennsylvania's Committee of Professional Practice and Conduct for Educators. It was interesting to note that the majority of the graduate students, many of whom were already practicing administrators, found the organizations' and states' professional codes to be new to them. On the whole, it seemed as if they had very little impact on their professional lives. Only in one case was a student actually involved in the process of developing a professional code at the state level.

A student in our course, a white male college professor, described the remoteness of the organizational codes and at the same time the positive impact of deriving his own codes when he wrote:

> Surprisingly, to me I even enjoyed doing the personal and professional ethics statements. I have been in union meetings where professional ethical statements were discussed. They were so bland and general as to be meaningless. Doing these statements forced me to think about what I do and how I live whereas the previous discussions did not. It was a very positive experience. I also subscribe to the notion that professional ethical codes are

of limited value. I look to myself to determine what decisions I can live with. Outside attempts at control have little impact on me and what I do.

Just as students varied in their approach to personal ethics, they were perhaps even more split in their approach to the way they viewed their professional codes. Consider this quote from Ellen [4], a white woman in her thirties, and former biologist, who had relocated from New York City:

> My professional ethical code is based on the concept that organizations do not exist, they are a reification created by persons who are most likely long since not affiliated with the organization. As an organization is a lifeless 'thing' it can not hold power over individuals, thus individual rights can not be subject to the whims of the organization.

Ellen continues stating that rules are not written in stone and that "rules, and the principle they are based on, are to be questioned constantly" and that "organizations have no right to ask an individual to violate her/his personal ethical code." These comments stand in direct contrast to those of students such as this secondary school science teacher, a white female in her late twenties, who stated that:

> Professionals may be guided in their practice by special norms that express the central values of the profession and that may override personal considerations that might guide the behavior of the professional. In administration, these codes must appeal to common moral principles and be accepted by society at large. The professional code for the administrator must be logically consistent and reasonable. It must be obviously just and good for all involved in the field of education.

This student went on to say that "procedures used must be consistent and whenever possible must be justified by rules and regulations" and that "personal preferences must be undermined, constantly being concerned with the professional good of the organization or as appropriate, the student."

Other students took a slightly different approach. As this African-American female teacher noted: "My professional code of ethics is a balance of my personal morals, ethics, and my regard for people first as a part of my 'constitution' . . . ." Many of our students, regardless of race, gender or age, put "equal respect" for others a primary tenet of their professional code of ethics and followed this with goals related to their own students. As one teacher, a white male in his 30s pointed out:

> I feel that educators are the true role models of our society, not actors and professional athletes . . . . Educators are responsible for teaching subject matter and the skills necessary for being successful in that subject. It is the development of these skills and knowledge base which aids in the educational advancement and maturation of the student. Considering the influence that educators have on

students, I hold them in high esteem and place high expectations on them.

This teacher's ethical code begins with the statement that he will "never give up on a student" followed by a vow to "always set high goals."

Another student, a female African-American principal, followed a similar vein stating that:

> It seems as if the world of professional ethics [for educational leaders] is uncharted territory. For example, one does not go to jail or pay a fine for breaches of professional ethics; however he or she may pay heavily, due to the hurt they may cause others.

Conflicts in Students' Ethical Codes

A theme critical to our research was the conflict surrounding students' personal and professional codes of ethics. As mentioned earlier, this conflict was seen in three ways: as a clash between ones personal and professional codes of ethics; as a clash among the codes of ethics of various students; as a clash that resulted because of career changes over time. Sometimes the conflicts were more subtle than one might expect and sometimes they were unexpectedly emotional.

An important part of the class discussions focused on morality where a major sub-theme involved the rights of the individual versus community expectations. Emotions ran high when we used one of the scenarios presented by Strike, Haller, and Soltis (1988) in their book, The Ethics of School Administration. This dilemma involved Sam Endicott, a principal who stopped off at a bar on the way home from a countrywide board meeting only to discover that the topless dancer performing there was none other than Ms. Loring, the ninth grade English teacher in his school. The dilemma was made all the more difficult because Ms. Loring was moonlighting to make extra money to support her sick mother.

It was perhaps on this dilemma more than any other that we saw not only a difference of opinion but also, for some, a real conflict between personal and professional ethical codes. A number of our students felt a definite pull as their personal ethical codes came into conflict with what others saw as appropriate professional behavior. As this white female in her forties pointed out: " . . . . my personal ethical code simply cannot accept the need to punish Ms. Loring for doing what she had to do to raise the money she needed to cover her 'seriously ill' mother's medical expenses. What is more, Endicott himself . . . observed that her in-class performance had not shown any sign of 'diminution' as the result of her outside work."

This student expressed annoyance with her "small group" stating explicitly that such attitudes were why she chose "not to become a school administrator." (This woman, while a secondary school teacher at the time of the ethics class aspired to seek a teaching position in higher education.) Ellen, another "higher education" student whose professional code was described earlier, expressed a similar view:

> The reaction of the class was interesting, especially since in all the personal ethical codes in my small group there was something about the importance of family. Most agreed that family members should be loyal and help one another. Yet, when a female teacher dances topless in a bar to earn money to pay her mother's medical bills, this is unacceptable. When this conflicting point was raised, most responded that ones professional code of ethics superseded personal codes, and that in the end individuals must bend to the will of their employment. This gave some interesting insights to the totalization that goes on inside lower school organizations. This doing the organization's bidding, no matter what the personal cost is intriguing. It also amazed me to listen to the class state that one has to accept things because "like it or not, that is the way it is." When the issue of the principal in the bar came up, the consensus was that he would not get into trouble, and that is the way it is.

Ellen also went on to note that:

> In . . . [one of the student-constructed dilemmas which involved] the principal pilfering student activity funds I did not see an ethical dilemma, the guy should be turned in. Yet the class did not seem ready to turn a principal in for illegal activity (embezzling of funds) while they were quite ready to turn in a teacher for a legal activity (dancing topless). I am not sure if this is because one is a principal (authority figure) or if it is because the principal in [the student's dilemma] was male. It would have been interesting to see the reactions if it were a female principal.

In contrast a white, female principal in her forties, and part of Ellen's group, commented in this way about the topless dancer case:

> When this case was discussed in class, quite a heated discussion arose. It was interesting because of the people involved in the group. Ellen, who came from a more liberal point of view (as opposed to those of us who are currently employed in the public school system) firmly believed in the teacher's right to dance and that this behavior in no way was reflective of her ability to perform as a teacher. While I totally agree with her on principle, I also know from personal experience in my district, that this behavior would never be tolerated. . . .

Conflict showed up in other ways. When faced with the writing of his personal code, a white male suburban school administrator began with concerns that clearly clashed with his professional role. He wrote:

> Preamble: I have little inclination for membership in organizations. I have little desire to be doctrinaire or 'by the book.' A strange sentiment for a vice-principal and disciplinarian.

Another student, who was an administrator at the state level, described her conflict regarding her current position and her need to remain as an educator in this way:

> On the note of becoming a bureaucrat, I refuse to be a typical state worker. My phone calls are returned the same day. I do not abuse sick or vacation leave, and I work very hard in each of my assignments to do the best job possible. My role in the Department of Education is to be of assistance to school districts in their effort to provide the best possible education to children. Bureaucrats forget this primary role, and that is what I refuse to do.

Sometimes the conflicts occurred because of the numerous careers that our adult students had experienced. A white male student who experienced a career change explained it this way:

> During the last ten years, my professional ethical code has experienced a Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde transformation. This metamorphosis is due to a career change and not diabolical experiments which cause a werewolf-like alter ego to emerge unexpectedly. -- I believe ethically and personally that I am a blend of both my business and education backgrounds. In business, I learned to completely analyze any situation, make rational decisions and recognize that the only individual looking out for me is me. In education, I have learned to consider issues such as gender and race, compassion and God. Hopefully, both backgrounds will faithfully guide me in the future.

Conclusions

In reflecting upon the journey that both our students and we, as their professors, embarked upon, it is interesting to note that some of our students grew as they thought through their personal codes. Consider the words of this student:

> The title of the first ethical dilemma, "The School Uniform Case," brought back a flood of old memories from my days as a Catholic school educator. If there was one thing I learned over the years it was how to keep things uniform -- in every sense of the word. However, I also discovered that uniformity, order, and conformity for the good of the whole came at the expense of individuality and freedom of choice and expression. This tug of war between these two perspectives resulted, in my mind, in a dilemma. However, I never really thought of it as an ethical dilemma. But why not? This question led me to reflect on how I had been defining morals and ethics. I suppose I always thought of it from a very narrow perspective. If the issue didn't comfortably fit the Ten Commandments or result in a trip to the confessional, it obviously didn't qualify as a moral dilemma. It was while discussing the uniform case that I began to see that there was more to this business of ethics and morals than a religious definition.

Listening to the students' voices regarding professional codes developed by national, state

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

and local organizations, it became apparent that these codes had little impact on them. Most students found it much more valuable to create their own codes. One of our students, a superintendent of a large rural district, described the importance of developing not only professional codes but of personal ones as well when he said:

> A professional ethical code cannot be established without linkage and reference to one's personal code of ethics and thereby acknowledges such influencing factors. In retrospect, and as a result of this assignment, I can see the influence professional responsibilities have upon my personal values, priorities, and behavior. It seems there is an unmistakable 'co-influence' of the two codes. One cannot be completely independent of the other.

Although it is hard to generalize, we noticed that there tended to be some conflicts among students who worked in higher education settings compared with those who worked in the schools. We also noticed very real differences among urban, suburban and rural educators. Clearly the communities in which they lived and worked impacted on the development of the codes of our students. Clashes also occurred when students had differing life experiences and a variety of careers. The code of another profession did not necessarily translate well to education. Frequently, while creating their codes, a number of students realized that they had come to rely on a kind of situational ethics to enable them to deal with the problems they faced each day.

A student, a white female in her forties, expressed her conflicting feelings this way.

> The thoughtful consideration of what I believe in, of the code by which I live my life, of my perceptions of what is right and wrong is a very exacting exercise. In trying to articulate my beliefs I am constantly aware that what is right for one situation is not necessarily right for another. I feel a need for certitude but realize that it does not exist. It would be so much easier if it did.

Our students were not the only ones who had to confront discomfort as they dealt with their personal and professional codes. As their professors, while we worked with them in class, reviewed their assignments, reflected upon our own codes, and wrote this and other papers related to our classes, we have had to face ourselves. Teaching ethics to educational leaders has become something of a soul-searching and meaningful experience. Thus, we not only advocate the teaching of ethics to aspiring educational leaders, but we recommend a process in which faculty take the time to create their own personal and professional codes along with their students. As we described in our research, there were many conflicts both between and among students and their personal and professional ethical codes. These clashes provided a powerful illustration of the moral polarization which can and does exist in our schools as well as in the society at large. Hopefully, the process of examining and coming to grips with ethical codes will prove to be a worthwhile endeavor that will assist all of us as educators in trying to solve the difficult dilemmas we frequently confront in this era of conflicting morals and values.

REFERENCES

Bakhtin, M. (1981). The dialogic imagination. Austin: University of Texas Press.

Banks, J.A. and Banks, C.A. (1993). Multicultural education: issues and perspectives (2nd Ed.). Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Beck, L.G. (1994). Reclaiming educational administration as a caring profession. New York: Teachers College Press.

Beck L.G. and Murphy, J. (1994a). A deeper analysis: Examining courses devoted to ethics. Presentation at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, April 6.

Beck, L.G. and Murphy J. (1994b). Ethics in educational leadership programs: An expanding role. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N. and Tarule, J. (1986). Women's ways of knowing. New York: Basic Books.

Bogdan, R.C. and Biklen, S.K. (1992). (2nd Ed.). Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Cambron-McCabe, N.H. and Foster, W. (1994). A paradigm shift: Implications for the preparation of school leaders. In T. Mulkeen, N.H. Cambron-McCabe and B. Anderson (Eds.) Democratic leadership: The changing context of administrative preparation (pp.49-60). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company.

Cushner, M., McClelland, A. and Safford P. (1992). Human diversity in education: An integrative approach. New York: McGraw Hill.

Foster, W. (1986). Paradigms and promises: New approaches to educational administration. Buffalo: Prometheus Books.

Foucault, M. (1983). On the genealogy of ethics: An overview of work in progress. In H.L. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow (Eds.), Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and hermeneutics, 2nd edition (pp. 229-52). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Freire, P. and Shor, I. (1987). A pedagogy for liberation: Dialogues on transforming education. South Hadley, MA: Bergin & Garvey.

Gilligan, C. (1982). In a different voice: Psychological theory and women's development. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gilligan, C., Ward, J.V. and Taylor, J.M. (1988). Mapping the moral domain. Cambridge: MA: Harvard University.

Giroux, H.A. (1994). Educational leadership and school administrators: Rethinking the meaning of democratic public culture. In T. Mulkeen, N.H., Cambron-McCabe and B. Anderson (Eds.) Democratic leadership: The changing context of administrative preparation (pp. 31-47). Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing Company.

Gollnick, D.M. and Chinn, P.C. (1994). Multicultural education in a pluralistic society. Columbus, OH: Merrill.

Goodlad, J.I., Soder, R. and Sirotnik, K.A. (Eds.). (1990). The moral dimension of teaching. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Greene, M. (1988). The dialectic of freedom. New York: Teachers College Press.

Greenfield, T.B. (1988). The decline and fall of science in educational administration. In D. Griffiths, R. Stout, and P. Stout (Eds.). Leaders for American Schools (pp.131-159). Berkeley, CA: McCutchan.

Greenfield, W.D. (1993). Articulating values and ethics in administrator preparation. In C. Capper (Ed.). Educational Administration in a Pluralistic Society (pp. 267-287). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

LeCompte, M. & Preissle, J. (1993). Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research. (2nd Ed.). New York: Academic Press.

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

McKinney, J.R. (1994). Non-traditional approaches to teaching educational leadership. Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science, 20(1&2).

McKinney, J.R. and Garrison, J. (1993). Foucault and Rousseau on teaching in modern technocratic schooling. Journal of Thought, 28(1&2): 61-82.

Merriam, S.B. (1988). Case study research in education: A qualitative approach. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Noddings, N. (1984). Caring: A feminine approach to ethics and moral education. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Noddings, N. (1992). The challenge to care in schools: An alternative approach to education. New York: Teachers College Press.

Purpel, D. (1989). The moral and spiritual crisis in education: A curriculum for justice and compassion in education. New York: Bergin and Garvey.

Sergiovanni, T.J. (1992). Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Shapiro, J.P., Sewell, T.E. and DuCette, J.P. (1995). Reframing diversity in education. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Pub. Co.

Shapiro, J.P. and Smith-Rosenberg, C. (1989). The 'other voices' in contemporary ethical dilemmas: The value of the new scholarship on women in the teaching of ethics. Women's Studies International Forum, 12(2):199-211.

Shapiro, J.P. and Stefkovich, J.A. (1994). Towards the preparation of ethical administrators for diverse communities. Paper presented at the conference of the University Council for Educational Administration, Philadelphia, October 30.

Shapiro, J.P. and Stefkovich, J.A. (1996). The ethics of justice, critique, and care: Preparing educational administrators to lead democratic and diverse schools. In Beck, L.G. & Murphy, J. (Eds.), Ethics in educational administration: emerging models. Columbia, University Council for Educational Administration.

Sleeter, C.E. and Grant, C.A. (1988). Making choices for multicultural education: Five approaches to race, class, and gender. New York: Macmillan.

Starratt, R.J. (1994). Building an ethical school. London: Falmer Press.

Stefkovich, J.A. and Shapiro, J.P. (1994). Personal and professional ethics for educational administrators. Review Journal of Philosophy and Social Science, 20 (1&2):157-186.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990). Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Strike, K.A. (1991). The moral role of schooling in a liberal democratic society. In Grant, G. (Ed.). Review of Research in Education (pp. 413-483). Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association.

Strike, K.A., Haller, E.J., & Soltis, J.F. (1988). The ethics of school administration. New York: Teachers College Press.

Endnotes

1. This brief description of our students is also found in our 1996 article.

2. Portions of our literature review are adapted from our earlier papers (1994, 1996).

3. In this research, we use a broad-based definition of diversity that encompasses cultural categories of race/ethnicity, religion, social class, gender, disability, and sexual orientation as well as individual differences taking into account learning styles, exceptionalities, and age (Banks and Banks, 1993; Cushner, McClelland, and Safford, 1992; Gollnick and Chinn, 1994; Shapiro, Sewell, and DuCette, 1995; and Sleeter and Grant, 1988.)

4.Ellen is a pseudonym constructed to ensure confidentiality.